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Influenza

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An inaugural dissertation

on

Influenza.

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by

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of

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Of Influenza.

I shall consider in treating of this disease
1st Its causes - both predisposing and exciting
2dly The symptoms as they occurred
3dly The mode of treatment, that was adopted

Physiologists & Pathologists, indeed Phylosophers of every clay - have tasked both, observation & conjecture to discover the cause of Epidemics
But their labours rich in other results, have let in no very steady light, on this dark path of our science. As yet too little is known, to entitle a typo. in medicine to speculate - and it remains for him rather to remember - than classify facts, which are not yet, sufficiently numerous, to permit even the greatest physicians to determine the true general causes of Epidemics
It will be safest, perhaps - to say that such causes are independent, but unknown, and that tho. they may be influenced, more or less

by ordinary states and changes of atmosphere, they are still different from these

To prove its independence, in an epidemic influenza for instance, place persons for experiment in whatever situation you may think proper, and protect them, as far as possible, from all common causes of disease, and yet many will be seized, and some will die.

It is true, that those most exposed will suffer most; but exemption is rather the effect of peculiarity of constitution, or of the counteracting and more powerful agency of some other morbid cause. Tho' the cause may be such as will predispose to, but not excite the disease, yet it is frequently capable of forcing it on the system

Commonly, however it lies dormant until roused by some changes of system, produced by other means.

Thus the seeds of a bilous disorder may remain, even, for months in embryo; and be called into dangerous action, by a delicate or, variable weather—

Of the symptoms of Influenza

It seems almost supererogation, in a production like this, to enumerate the symptoms, which may be found, so well depicted by almost every author, who has written on the subject— Nevertheless it seems from the diversion of the subject, that they are of no little importance, and that the treatment of the disease, is altogether governed by them— The symptoms which I believe to be the most common, precursors, are sneezing, fulness of the head, and nases, a distillation from the nose which was sometimes quite distressing from its obstructing respiration. dryness of the fauces & Trachea, with cough. much inclination to sit near

the fire - no disposition to exercise - To these succeeded flushings of the face - an acceleration of pulse - with fulness and tension - at other times fulness & tension without, its being increased in frequency - and in other cases, it was very much contracted & corded, In fact, we had every variety of pulse

In all of the attacks, the tongue was covered with a white fur - except in bilious cases. A general fulness of the head, torpid bowels, & a dry skin, - were very common symptoms. - After these had continued for a short time, the disease came to a favourable crisis, either by the skill of the physician, or the efforts of nature. The crises was generally ushered in, by a mild expectoration, a gentle diaphoresis - or diarrhoea. - But in a great number of cases, all the above enumerated symptoms were greatly aggravated, and we had to

combat, such incordinate increase of fever, thirst, - lancinating pains in the sides, & breast, aggravated cough - headache &c; with much delirium. - Besides these, the greatest difficulty of respiration was experienced, amounting almost in some cases to suffocation; resembling very much, the pantings, of a fatigued dog. - In many instances, and these were the most desperate and fatal, the disease came on like destruction, in in a very short time - with coldness of the extremities & surface, & great prostration of the system. - These were cases of congestion, in the head, lungs - liver - spleen or intestines, deceiving the physician, & leading him to strong stimulants, - when in fact, he is called on, to use warm external applications - warm - drinks, & occasionally, emetics, until a reaction was brought about. - Then the use of the lancet & active cathartics - was found

to be requisite - In one case the pain of the hand and arm was so severe - that the patient was continually crying out "my hand and arm pain me to my very heart" In another case the pain in the integuments of the cranium, which occupied not more than the space of two inches square was so excruciating, as to force the tormented patient to cry out, "insufferable - insufferable oh! do something for me; or I must die" -- Together with these, a sore throat, was not at all, uncommon - an examination of which brought to view - an inflamed state of the tonsil glands;- the ear sympathising with which, produced, some of the most vehement symptoms, - Indeed, so violently was the ear affected in one case - as to produce no little, anxiety for the safety, of the patient - The eyes were also frequently inflamed; so much so, in some cases as to produce

an increased secretion of tears, which were very troublesome & distressing ——

The conjoined influence of these symptoms — for any length of time, or in fact, their existence, for a very short time, would bid defiance, to all the skill of the most successful physicians —

Whenever these cases as I said before, came to a favourable crisis, it was marked, by a free & copious expectoration — by a universal but gentle diaphoresis — or by a mild and salutary diarrhoea — leaving behind only a state of debility — But whenever this happy crisis was not to be seen, a train of fatal symptoms — soon followed; such as cold & partial sweats about the head and breast, particularly the forehead, dilatations and contractions of the Alæ nasi, a universal tremor of the tongue, when projected from the mouth, a sunken & glassy eye

a cadaverous physiognomy, a prostrated state of the arterial system - hiccup - cold extremities with a cessation of their vascular action - relaxation of the sphincter muscles, with involuntary discharges - and death -
In some cases, the patients were cloven down by, the violence of the disease, in, a few hours after the attack. - Such a case came, under my own view - & several others were communicated to me - - Even when death, did not take place, as soon, as mentioned - an unfortunate remnant of disease - predisposed the lungs, to severe & unmanageable congestions - and laid - frequently the foundation for hydrothorax and consumption - -

Of the treatment of Influenza -

That the disease assumed a grade of high action - is evident, from the foregoing symptoms. - An action which - in the commencement, called

for, the the most apparent treatment;, otherwise, the symptoms would become so firm-ly rooted - that it was with the greatest diffi-culty - the chain of morbid action could be, broken up -

In encountering an attack of this kind - the physician must proceed with promptness & boldness - founded upon true principles, & guided by judgement and sound discretion; and assert the symptoms;, indicating a lesion of the different organs, wherever they were found - and meet them, from whatever source, they might spring - In the incipient stage, of a great majority of cases, the lancet was urgently demanded - Finding - by the difficulty of respiration - and structure of the chest, that, the bronchial system was violently attacked;, the physician in plethoric cases & full habits - ought hard-ly ever to wait for the pulse - alone, to point

out bleeding - This operation was to be per-
-formed - when demanded by the urgency of
the symptoms & distress of the patient, and
repeated so long as required by these circum-
stances - Post, mortem examination
revealed to us, that the lungs were almost
universally, in a state of engorgement,
and that when, this highly congested state,
was suffered to remain for any length of
time - their structure must necessarily be
destroyed - Acting upon these principles,
the use of the lancet, in this stage - could
hardly fail, to be, of important utility -
In those plain cases of high action - indica
-ted by a full, open, and strong, pulse - with
increased frequency, associated - either with
general, or local distress, the course to be
pursued was obvious - The lancet - emetics,
active cathartics - such as Calomel, with
Jallap or gamboge &c. were imperiously

called for - since in our southern climate the disease was almost always, of a bilious type, After the full operation of these, the milder were to be used, or the more gentle continued, according to the presence or absence of bilious symptoms, Until this active excitement, was somewhat reduced, strict attention to diet. and close confinement, were to be particularly observed, This treatment followed, by, the occasional use, of laxatives, for the purpose, of keeping the bowels gently open, and the administration of diaphoretics - such, as the Antimonial preparations - sweet, spirits nitre, with the use of warm diluent drinks - such as - balm tea - Sage tea - apple water - toast water lemonade &c. with a Dovers Powder at night - generally, completed, a cure -
In milder cases, an emetic and cathartic

or two, - with confinement, and antimonials aided by warm teas, were found to be sufficient - But in those more alarming cases of congestion, a different treatment was called for, - When the attack came on with alternate chills & heat, - or a constant chilliness, with cold extremities & surface, a quick - frequent, and small pulse; severe pain in the head, breast, or bowels, with a difficult & hurried respiration, denoting congestion of these parts &c, our practice was to give Tartar emetic & calomel combined, in the proportion of two grains of the former, to ten of the latter, adding sometimes, gamboge, to make a powerful impression on the system, for the purpose of arousing its energy, diffusing action, and determining to the surface; using, at the same time warm drinks, sometimes, a little stimulating - and external warmth,

and as soon as the action was diffused, and the equilibrium more restored, which was denoted, by a full and strong pulse; with heat of skin — the lancet was employed, more or less as the patients seemed to require, and could bear it — The prompt use, of these powerful means, in the incipient stage, so as to relieve the congested bloodvessels, prevented the vital organs, from being overwhelmed — We have even, in such extreme cases of oppression, used the lancet, in robust & plethoric habits — and administered a strong cordial immediately afterwards, and I have seen it act, like a charm — When the lungs are the parts, which suffer most, which is known by cough and obscure and acute pain, in the sides, and breast — difficult & hurried respiration — dilatations & contractions of the ala nasi,

repeated emetics, with the judicious use of the lancet, followed by cupping, leeching and blistering, was the practice, which seemed most beneficial — I have known & seen patients, blistered three fourths around the chest, and from the neck, down, to the umbilical region — In all pulmonic affections after depleting; expectorants, demulcents, antimonials &c. were used — In cerebral affections, shaving the head and applying cold water — blisters to the scalp, or cups to the temples, leeches, blisters to the nape of the neck, &c. was a practice well rewarded — When the local distress, of some vital organ, continued, after the high action, had been reduced, these local means, were persevered in — together with gentle aperients, diaphoretics and diluents — until these symptoms were relieved. — And when there was a typhoid

disposition, as was sometimes the case. The volatile Alkali & Camphor, with antimony were used - as ten grains of the former every hour or two & from five to ten of the latter, every two hours - in the form of Julep - using in conjunction wine whey - At any stage of the disease, when there was coldness of the surface, and the temperature, could not be restored by these stimuli; hot toddy, and warm applications externally, with the use of Spirits of turpentine, were brought into their aid - The turpentine was given in doses of ten or fifteen drops every thirty minutes, increasing it to twenty or thirty - Also it was rubbed hot, upon the extremities. - It was also given in injections, conjoined, with bath, every two hours - This practice has succeeded when every other failed. - I consider the

Turpentine, to be one of the most powerful means to warm the surface, we have.— This is the practice of a few southern physicians, in congestive bilious fever— as well as the congestive epidemic, and Typhoid fever — Sometimes there were congestions of the bowels & liver, with obstinate constipation, tumefaction & pain, which called for Calomel, Jallap Gamboge, Croton oil, Elaterium &c, followed by milder remedies, such as castor oil - Senna & salts, until the bowels were evacuated, using at the same time injections of Senna and Jallap or salts, dissolved in warm water - or the common injection —
After the full action of these, if there was still pain and tumefaction, in the abdomen, injections of simple warm water were found, vastly beneficial, given every hour or two — I do believe, however

simple, they may seem to be, that they are one of the most powerful means to cooperate with blisters, antimonials, demulcents, and expectorants, to determine to the surface –

I need not speak of those dropsical cases – as hydrothorax ascites &c – which from bad treatment, or neglect, were the results of this epidemic, as they require a separate consideration – But I would observe that the epidemic, has, in some cases (and that not a few) so insidiously travelled upon the patients, as seemed hardly to require much attention, so that the subjects were one day pretty well, the next a sicker, with clean tongue and good appetite – But the disease gradually gained ground, without, exciting much alarm, until the breathing became hurried & convulsive, the cough

frequent & dry, frequent and small pulse, with, a considerable degree of tension, obscure pain, or uneasiness in the breast, and increased difficulty of breathing, on laying down, denoting dropsical effusions, and chronic inflammation of the lungs —
These lingering cases, still gradually, gaining ground upon the sufferers. for three four or five months, & finally destroying them, in despite of every remedial effort —
I am fully of the opinion, that if they, had been attacked early, with the lancet, repeated emetics, mild cathartics, and persevering abstinence, a favourable solution would have been very often the result — —
The physicians of my acquaintance, advise to this plan — But the subjects of the disease, thought, remedies unnecessary, by reason of its mildness — Post mortem examinations, developed the nature of the disease, and the

course to be pursued - But to return to the use of the lancet - It must be judiciously used - having an eye, to the plethora & habits of the patients - If they are athletic & hard labourers, and in the habit, of submitting to that evacuation &c they bear it well in the incipient attacks, although previous to this, they complained, of the greatest debility - and were weighed down with the disease - This course of depletion, lessened the oppression and the patients gained their strength - I might compare it to a heavy burthen, pressing a man to the ground, by lessening the weight he will gradually arise